

Los Angeles County DCFS Adoptions Division Post Adoption Services (PAS) Newsletter

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ISSUE #1

Welcome to the PAS newsletter!

The purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to provide information about what type of assistance is available through the Post Adoption Services unit.

Often, adoptees, birth relatives and adoptive families seek assistance in accessing information about adoption. PAS is able to offer non-identifying medical and social history; filing of consents and waivers for reunions; support groups; and consultation relating to (post) adoption questions and issues. We have learned that all members of the adoption triad have natural questions, curiosities and thoughts about their relationship to adoption. If you would like more information, please call the PAS duty line at (800) 735-4984.

Did you know...?

- ❖ There is a tax benefit for adoptive parents. This “adoption credit” is an amount that is subtracted from the adoptive parent’s tax liability. The maximum credit - \$10,390 for 2004 – is allowed for the adoption of a child with special needs. Children adopted from the foster care system may qualify as having “special needs.” For more information, please confer with a tax consultant and/or the IRS at (800) 829-1040 or www.irs.gov.
- ❖ If you have questions or need help (i.e. about AAP) during the first six (6) months after your child’s adoption finalizes, contact the Adoption CSW who handled your case prior to finalization. A PAS social worker will process AAP inquiries and handle concerns/questions when your adoption has been finalized for more than for six months.

Stories about how PAS has helped

Here’s a story about one case assigned to a PAS social worker. A birth mother called the PAS duty line wanting information about and possible contact with the son she relinquished shortly after he was born. At the time she relinquished him, he was in good health... and that’s the last the birth mother knew about her son until she called the PAS unit decades later. The PAS worker reviewed the child’s casefile and learned that because of the child’s developmental disabilities, he was never adopted. The PAS worker counseled the birthmother to help her process painful feelings and the difficult information given to her. The birthmother was not able to get in contact with her son due to his death from a medical condition as an adult. She was, however, able to get in touch with the foster family who raised him for many years. She learned that her son had been loved and well cared for by the foster family, who met all of her son’s special needs. This knowledge gave the birthmother a degree of peace. Throughout this time, the birth mother maintained ongoing communication with the PAS worker who was a supportive person involved in this important period in her life.

Adoption support groups

We have five support groups throughout Los Angeles County which are facilitated by social workers from the Post Adoption Services unit.

These monthly support groups are available to adoptive parents who have finalized their adoptions, and are a safe, informal place where parents can get together to share concerns, feelings, problems and questions related to adoption and parenting. There is no set agenda for what is talked about during the groups – what is discussed is what is on your mind at the time. Adoptive parents are encouraged to bring topics of interest to the support groups. Adoptive parents are invited to attend regularly or on a “drop-in” basis (RSVP’s are appreciated). Groups are for

parents only, no childcare is provided. Groups generally last 1-2 hours.

For more details about the current monthly adoptive parent support groups, please call the PAS duty line. We will be happy to give you directions, information, and/or to place you on a support group mailing list.

We have support groups that meet:

- on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm in Los Angeles
- on the second Wednesday of every month at 6:00pm in San Pedro
- on the third Tuesday of every month at 10:00am in Lancaster
- on the third Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm in Pasadena
- in the San Fernando Valley (call the duty line for days/times)

Additional Resources

There are countless books, support groups, online websites available that can help adoptive parents, birth parents and adoptees in a variety of ways.

Using books with children is a great way to talk about adoption with them. Here are a few examples:

For adoptive parents:

- 1) "Telling the Truth to Your Adopted or Foster Child: Making Sense of the Past" by Betsy Keefer & Jayne E. Schooler
- 2) "Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish their Adoptive Parents Knew" by Sherrie Eldridge

For children:

- 1) "A Koala for Katie" by Jonathan London
- 2) "Why Was I Adopted?" by Carole Livingston

See a suggested book list online at:

<http://www.cradle.org/pas/reading.cfm>

Read online articles for families who have adopted children with special needs at:

http://www.nacac.org/pas_resources.html

Common questions & answers

Q: I am an adoptive parent and I am moving. Who do I call to make sure the AAP checks are sent to our new address?

A: *Call the AAP hotline at: (800) 697-4444. (Call this number also when you have problems like your child's Medi-Cal card is not working).*

Q: My child's adoption was finalized three months ago, and we still haven't received her new birth certificate. How do we get a copy of it?

A: *You are automatically sent one (free) certified copy of your child's birth certificate after the adoption is final, however; the "automatically" part can take about eight months, due to a backlog. If you've been waiting at least eight months, you can call the Calif. Dept. Health Services Office of Vital Records at (916) 445-2684.*

Post Adoption Services Team

Assistant Regional Administrator

Esther Herrera

Supervisors

Lorna Fibus

Selena McCurdy

PAS Social Workers

Myrna De La Cruz

Denise Lytle

Vergel De La Cruz

Barbara McDermott

Grace Hardgrove

G.W. Moore

Kay Ingram

Clare Naughton

Grace Kim

Jennifer Nelson

Bill Leach

Angelica (Perez) Petitt

Margaret Lipton

Jennifer White

Staff Assistants

Marie Mosley

Don Offer

PAS Duty Line

Direct inquiries to: 800-735-4984

This newsletter is accessible on the DCFS Internet website at <http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us/> and on DCFS' internal site, LAKids.

If you would like to submit questions or see other information added to this newsletter, please e-mail Clare Naughton or Jennifer White.